NOTE XIX.

ON AN APPARENTLY NEW FORM OF *CASUARIUS* FROM THE NORTHCOAST OF NEW GUINEA

BY

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(With plate 8).

In 1904 Mr. J. W. van Nouhuys, the commander of the steamer which brought the Wichmann-expedition in 1903 along the northcoast of New Guinea to the Humboldt Bay, presented to the Zoological Garden at Rotterdam a young cassowary; this bird lived there till May 1907, when it died and when it was, by the kindness of Dr. Büttikofer, the director of the Garden, sent to our Museum. The bird, a male, is now at least four years old; it is full-grown, though its plumage is not yet entirely black, but here and there, and especially between the so-called tailfeathers, some brown feathers are still to be seen. With a few words Mr. Lorentz makes mention of this bird in his narrative [1]) of the expedition, but he does not say, where the bird was caught. As Mr. van Nouhuys and also Mr. Lorentz are at present again on New Guinea, I asked the other zoologist of the expedition, Mr. L. F. de Beaufort, if he could tell me where the bird was obtained. This gentleman most kindly informed me, that the bird is originating from the northcoast of New Guinea, west of the Humboldt Bay, very probably from Tarfia near the Matterer Bay, but this he did not remember with certainty. I hope to learn later the exact locality from Mr. van Nouhuys.

Our specimen belongs to the *Casuarius casuarius*-group and as to the wattles it most resembles *Casuarius casuarius beccarii*, under which name I have mentioned the bird in

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1) H. A. Lorentz, Eenige maanden onder de Papoea's, Leiden 1905, p. 78.

my osteological catalogue [1]. Determining the bird in Rothschild's Monograph [2]) with the key only, it must be *C. c. beccarii*; comparing the bird with the descriptions of this species, with that by Sclater [3]) as well as with that by Rothschild, it shows some differences. But considering that the bird is not quite adult and that it has lived in confinement, and also that Salvadori [4]) unites *sclateri* with *beccarii*, so that, according to this author, *beccarii* has a wide distribution over southern New Guinea, I then thought our bird to be *C. c. beccarii.* A careful re-examination of the matter has convinced me however that, though our bird is a very near ally of *C. c. beccarii*, it differs from this form and from all other forms of the *Casuarius casuarius*-group in such points, that it is necessary to separate it. According to two conspicuous streaks of a fleshy-red colour reaching from the base of the lower mandible to the wattles I call this form:

Casuarius casuarius bistriatus.

This specimen shows that we have on the northcoast of New Guinea a Cassowary-form most nearly allied to a form of the Aroe Islands, while it is less allied to forms, which occur on the mainland of New Guinea. It seems that our knowledge of the Cassowaries is either very incomplete or the naked parts of these birds are subject to an extraordinary individual variation.

The total length of our bird, from the posterior edge of the casque to the end of the tailfeathers, is 1340 mm., the length of the tarsometatarsus is 270 mm.

The casque is not high, about 50 mm., and laterally not much compressed. The anterior surface is not convex as in other members of this group, but a little knocked in, very probably in consequence of the confinement; the posterior edge is rounded. The whole is still in a state of growing and scaling. The colour on the fore part and on

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1) Mus. Pays-Bas, X, 1e part. 1907, p. 326.
2) T. Z. S. XV, 1901, p. 109.
3) P. Z. S. 1875, p. 87.
4) Cat. B. B. M. XXVII, 1895, p. 596.

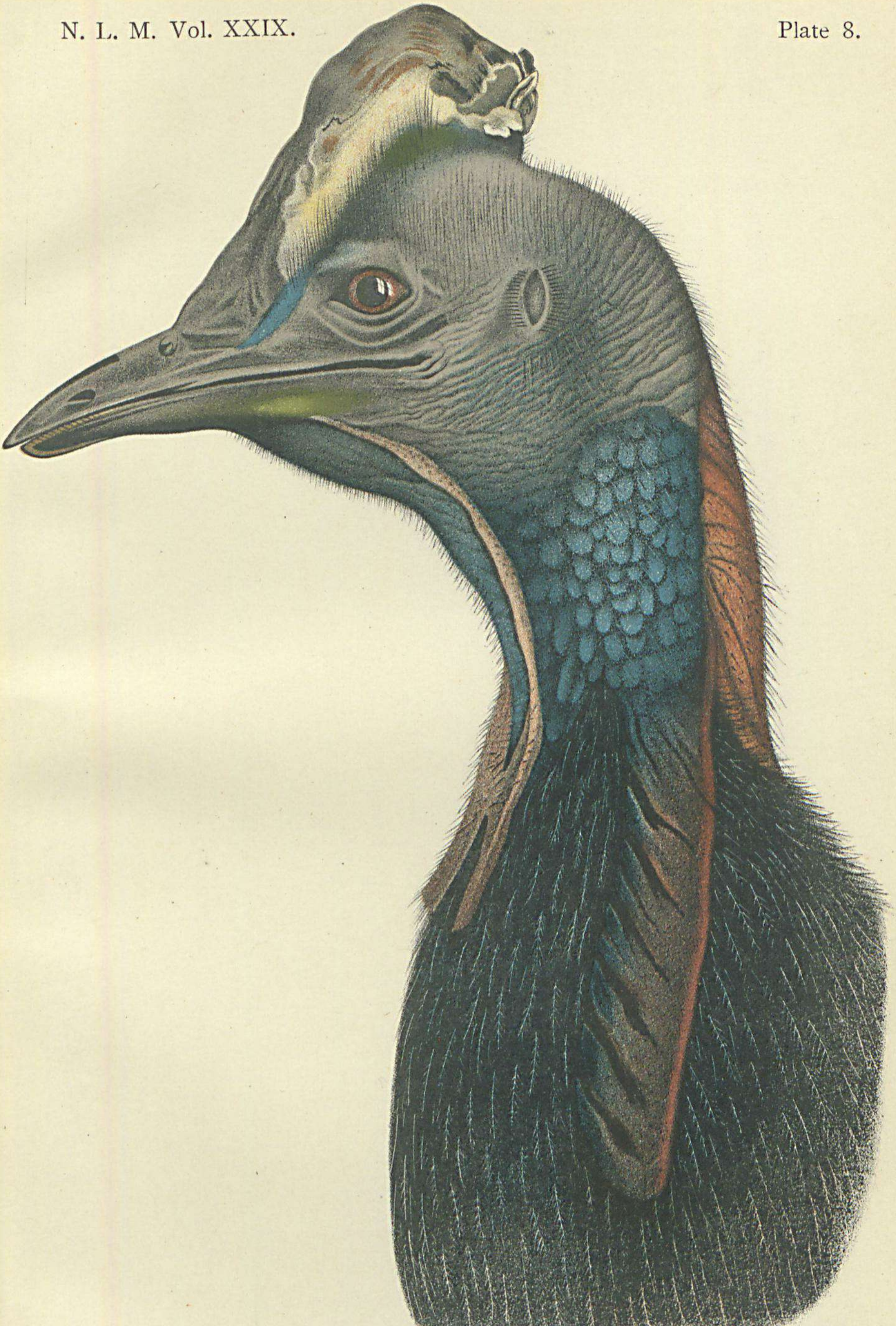
the top of the casque is black, on the sides blackish with dark brown spots and along the base yellowish white. The bill is black, only the tip is greyish and the base of the lower mandible is yellowish green. The length of the bill from the tip to the casque is 63 mm., the length from the gape 133 mm.

The chin, throat and fore part of the neck are dark blue. Along the base of the casque and principally in front of the eyes the colour is dark blue, while in the back part the colour along the base is greenish. The wattles are short and feshy-red; from the base of the lower mandible at each side a very conspicuous ridge of a fleshy-red colour leads to the base of the wattles. A similar ridge is to be seen on the plate of *C. c. beccarii* in Rothschild's Monograph, but here these ridges but very slightly differ in coloration from the surrounding parts. The wattles are joined at the base for about 15 mm.; the right wattle is 26 mm. long, the left 34 mm. The head, the sides of the head round the ears and the occiput are dark grey with here and there a slight bluish tinge; the same coloration has the upper part of the hind neck. Naked upper sides of the neck are dark blue mixed with dark grey, only their lower portion is pure dark blue. The lower part of the hind neck is orange, passing to its margins into vermillion; this latter colour is also to see between the surrounding feathers. Between the bluish grey upper part of the hind neck and the lower orange parts the coloration is a mixture of greyish blue and orange red, lying between two upward offshoots of the orange red colour of the hind neck.

The naked lower sides of the neck surrounded by the feathers are in the middle greyish with violet, blue and fleshy-red tinges; anteriorly they are dark blue, posteriorly scarlet vermillion, which colour passes between the feathers into orange vermillion.

The legs are brownish grey and the irides brown.

Leyden Museum, December 1907.



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Casuarius casuarius bistriatus.